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## EDITORIAL

### THE PROFESSOR AND THE FINGER BOWL

To tell a new Lincoln story is something of an achievement. Colonel Tom Brown, a former citizen of Badgerdom, who now resides in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, has achieved this distinction, we believe, in relating the following incident. In view of the nature of our leading article, and of the local interest which attaches to Mr. Brown's tale, we gladly give it such additional currency as lies within our power.

In some sections of southwestern Wisconsin during the Civil War, so the story runs, certain copperhead organizations, particularly the Knights of the Golden Circle, became decidedly outspoken in the expression of their sentiments—so much so that a group of loyal citizens decided to send a spokesman to Washington to acquaint the President with the threatening proceedings. The delegate chosen for this mission was a certain Professor Kilgore of Evansville Seminary. On his arrival at Washington he was invited to take lunch at the White House, where he was seated next to President Lincoln himself. At this time finger bowls were coming into fashion, but their advent had not as yet come within the ken of the simple western professor. Accordingly he was greatly perplexed by the little dish, containing a slice of lemon and some liquid, apparently lemonade, which appeared near the close of the meal. Observing his embarrassment, President Lincoln, leaning toward him, whispered, "Professor, don't sip out of that bowl, watch me."

Following this kindly instruction the pedagogue concluded the meal without disgracing himself. When, later, they found themselves alone together, President Lincoln confided to the visitor that he himself needed a servant to keep him informed about "those little things."

We cannot vouch for the truth of the story, although it rests on better authority than most of the tales that are told about Lincoln. However authentic its details, it presents a trait of homely kindness, the possession of which constitutes one of the most attractive aspects of Lincoln's personality.

#### THE PRINTING OF HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS

The last day of the year brings to hand the January, 1917, number of the quarterly *Journal* of a neighboring state historical society. What the local conditions may be which render it necessary to be a year behind with the publication of this periodical, we are unaware. Reference is made to it by way of calling attention to a practice which is all too common with respect to the issuance of historical periodicals and other publications. If a quarterly must appear six months or a year late it would seem to be a fair question whether its appearance at all is worth while. If such delays are due to the slackness or incompetency of the editor, the proper authorities should apply a much needed stimulant. If they are due to conditions beyond the editor's control, reform (in the quarter responsible for the delay) is still desirable. We suspect that commonly such delays are caused by the state printers, by whom, at least in the Middle West, historical publications are generally issued. We speak the more feelingly on the subject because our own Society is not immune from the criticism under discussion. The printer dallied for a year over our most recently issued volume, while it required six months to get a forty-page bulletin printed. It avails little for editors to be punctual and businesslike in turning out their work, if it may then be hung up indefinitely by the printer, with the editor deprived of any means of amending the situation. Quite possibly state printers are themselves the victims of a system the amendment of which is beyond their control. Of this we have no particular knowledge. Wherever the responsibility may justly be placed, the